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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/813,533

Applicant(s)

TAMAI, SEIICHIRO

Examiner

Colin M. LaRose

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 March 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

Detailed Action

Arguments and Amendments

1. Applicant's amendments and arguments filed 4 March 2005, have been entered and made of record.

Specification

Objections: Title of the Invention

2. The amended title is accepted.

Objections: Specification

3. The previous objection to the Specification has been withdrawn in view of Applicant's amendment thereto.

Claims

Response to Arguments and Remarks

4. Regarding claim 2, Applicant has amended the claim to denote that (a) a guide image is displayed "before obtaining the object image," and (b) the guide image is "layered ... over the object image after obtaining the object image," wherein (c) the guide image is "displayed at a fixed position on the display."

Regarding (a), Holliman appears to disclose the guide image is overlaid before obtaining an object image. See column 11, lines 42-52: the display displays a video feed of the

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observer, the processor overlays the image with a graphical guide, and then the image of the object inside the graphical guide is captured.

Regarding (b), Holliman does not appear to disclose this feature – i.e. once the user presses the mouse button to capture the image inside the guide, Holliman does not appear to continue displaying the captured image with the guide overlayed.

Regarding (c), Holliman discloses that user is to position his head within the graphical guide rather than vice versa; this implies that the guide is in a fixed position on the display. See column 11, lines 42-52.

Since Holliman does not fairly disclose or suggest (b) the guide image is “layered ... over the object image after obtaining the object image,” the claim, as amended, overcomes the previous rejection of Flom in view of Holliman.

However, newly discovered prior art (U.S. 6,633,655 by Hong et al.) fairly suggests the deficiencies of Holliman. Hong’s disclosure is substantially similar to that of Holliman, but Hong discloses a slight variation pertaining to the displaying of the guide image, including limitations (a)-(c). See below for details.

Objections

5. The object to claim 18 objected has been withdrawn in view of Applicant’s amendment thereto.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112(2)

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6. In view of Applicant's amendments and remarks, the previous rejections under 35 USC 112, 1st and 2nd paragraphs, have been withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

7. Before proceeding, note that extensive reference will be made to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (filed March 23, 2004). This will be referred to simply as "previous Office Action dated 3/23/04".

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 2, 6, 18, and 27-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87] (U.S. Patent 4,641,349) in view of [Hong] (U.S. Patent 6,633,655).

Regarding claim 18, [Flom87] discloses a system used for identity verification based on biometrics, comprising:

A biometric information storage means for storing reference biometric information describing a form characteristic body part (figure 2, block 60 comprised stored biometric information pertaining to the characteristics of known irides);

An image data obtaining means for obtaining image data, without physical contact, describing a body part (figure 2, block 50 obtains an image of an eye without physically contacting the eye); and

A verification means for extracting biometric information describing a form characteristic of the body part from the object image, and verifying identity by comparison with stored reference biometric information (figure 7: descriptors (i.e. biometric information) are extracted from the image of the eye and are compared the stored references in order to verify the identity of the eye).

[Flom87] does not disclose the image data obtaining means includes a guide showing an outline of the body part before obtaining the object image, as claimed.

[Hong] discloses an image tracking system involving the recognition of the human face and the selection of the interesting image region, such as the eye region. For the purposes of acceptably aligning this eye region, the system displays an image of the observer as captured by a video camera. The image is overlaid with a *graphical guide* indicating that the observer should position herself/himself so that his eyes are properly aligned with respect to the graphical guide on the display. When the observer places his head within the guide markings and the face analyzer 18 is applied to the region in order to capture the target image of the eye region. Once the analyzer 18 locates the target image, the target image is displayed with a graphical overlay so that the user can see the position of the target image and decide whether to accept it. See column 21, line 53 through column 22, line 9.

In other words, the system of [Hong] includes:

an image data obtaining means that includes a guide showing an outline of

the body part before obtaining the object image.

According to [Hong], the decision of whether an image is properly aligned rests on the observer. Advantageously, this alleviates the system of the computational burden that would have otherwise been required had the determination of alignment been fully automated. Furthermore, because a human observer is more naturally attuned to varying environmental conditions such as lighting, as well as the peculiarities of his/her eye region, the aforementioned process ensures that the alignment is robust and efficient. See [Hong] column 11, last paragraph. Therefore, given [Hong], it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the Applicant's claimed invention, to incorporate the guide display means (i.e. graphical guide) of [Hong] into a biometric identity verification apparatus, such as that of [Flom87]. It would be understood that by properly aligning the eye – and, hence, the irises – one ensures that the most accurate biometric data can be extracted from the captured image. Furthermore, within the context of [Flom87], the still, or final object image would have been understood to be the image used for extracting biometric information. The combination of [Flom87] and [Hong] would, therefore, include:

an image data obtaining means that includes a guide showing an outline of
the body part before obtaining the object image.

Further regarding claim 18, the preamble term “portable card” has been given no patentable weight because it does not appear to limit the claim. It is unclear what constitutes “portable” as no corresponding structure is presented in the body of the claim to delimit the portability of the card. In sum, the “portable card” in the preamble does not appear to constitute

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essential structure, nor does it “give life, meaning and vitality to the claim.” See Pitney Bowes, 51 USPQ2d at 1165-66; Kropa v. Roble, 88 USPQ 478, 480-481 (CCPA 1951).

10. *The following is in regard to Claim 2.* As shown in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 3-4), [Flom87] disclose an identity verification apparatus based on biometrics comprising:

- (2.a.) Scanning means for obtaining an object image by scanning a body part of a person without physical contact.
- (2.b.) An image display means for displaying the object image to the person
- (2.d.) A judgment means for judging whether the body part has been scanned in the proper position. [Flom87] suggests the usage of an automatic alignment system using a feedback circuit and a servo-control mechanism to adjust the relative positions of the iris and the camera. Inherent to such a system is a means for judging whether the iris was scanned in the proper position.
- (2.e.) A verification means for extracting biometric information describing a form characteristic of the body part from the object image, if in the proper position, and verifying identity by comparison with stored reference biometric information

For the sake of brevity, the details relating to these items will not be repeated. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04.

[Flom87] does not expressly disclose:

(2.c.) A guide display means for displaying a guide image before obtaining the object image, and for layering the guide image over the object image after obtaining the object image, the guide image being displayed at a fixed position on a display and showing an outline of the body part in proper position;

[Hong] disclose an image tracking system involving the recognition of the human face and the selection of the interesting image region, such as the eye region. For the purposes of acceptably aligning this eye region, the system displays an image of the observer as captured by a video camera. The image is overlaid with a *graphical guide* (e.g. graphical guide 16 in [Hong] Fig. 16A) indicating that the observer should position herself/himself so that his eyes are properly aligned with respect to the graphical guide on the display. When the observer places his head within the guide markings and the face analyzer 18 is applied to the region in order to capture the target image of the eye region. Once the analyzer 18 locates the target image, the target image is displayed with a graphical overlay so that the user can see the position of the target image and decide whether to accept it. See column 21, line 53 through column 22, line 9.

In other words, the system of [Hong] includes:

(2.c₁.) A guide display means for displaying a guide image before obtaining the object image, and for layering the guide image over the object image after obtaining the object image, the guide image being displayed at a fixed position on a display and showing an outline of the body part in proper position.

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According to [Hong], the decision of whether an image is properly aligned rests on the observer. Advantageously, this alleviates the system of the computational burden that would have otherwise been required had the determination of alignment been fully automated. Furthermore, because a human observer is more naturally attuned to varying environmental conditions such as lighting, as well as the peculiarities of his/her eye region, the aforementioned process ensures that the alignment is robust and efficient. See [Hong] column 11, last paragraph. Therefore, given [Hong], it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the Applicant's claimed invention, to incorporate the guide display means (i.e. graphical guide) of [Hong] into a biometric identity verification apparatus, such as that of [Flom87]. It would be understood that by properly aligning the eye – and, hence, the irises – one ensures that the most accurate biometric data can be extracted from the captured image. Furthermore, within the context of [Flom87], the still, or final object image would have been understood to be the image used for extracting biometric information. The combination of [Flom87] and [Hong] would, therefore, include:

- (2.c.) A guide display means for displaying a guide image before obtaining the object image, and for layering the guide image over the object image after obtaining the object image, the guide image being displayed at a fixed position on a display and showing an outline of the body part in proper position.

Clearly this can be used in conjunction with item (2.d.) above.

Although [Flom87] discloses the claimed judgment means, it should be noted that [Hong] as disclose judging whether the body part (i.e. the eyes) has been scanned in the proper position

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by allowing a user to verify the position with the aid of an overlaid graphical guide (see column 22, lines 1-9).

11. *The following is in regard to Claim 6.* It was effectively shown in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 that, the identity verification apparatus of [Flom87] includes:

(6.a.) A repetition control means for controlling the scanning means in order to repeatedly scan the body part.

(6.b.) A verification means for extracting biometric information from a plurality of object images obtained by repeated scanning and verifying identity.

The combination of [Flom87] and [Hong] would, thus, incorporate these elements. For the sake of brevity, the details relating to these items will not be repeated. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, page 5).

12. *The following is in regard to Claims 27-28.* These claims recite substantially the same limitations as Claim 2. Therefore, with regard to Claims 27-28, remarks analogous to those presented above relating to Claim 2 are applicable.

13. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Ito03] (U.S. Patent 6,526,160).

14. *The following is in regard to Claim 3.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Ito03] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of

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obviousness can be established in view of [Ito03] along the same lines of the original rejection.

For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 6-7).

15. Claims 4-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Steinberg02] (U.S. Patent 6,433,818).

16. *The following is in regard to Claims 4-5.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Steinberg02] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Steinberg02] along the same lines of the original rejections. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 7-10).

17. Claims 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Fleming] (GB Patent Application Publication 2,229,305).

18. *The following is in regard to Claims 7-11.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Fleming] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to

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combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Fleming] along the same lines of the original rejections. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 10-14).

19. Claims 12-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Brown03] (U.S. Patent 6,618,806).

20. *The following is in regard to Claims 12-13.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Brown03] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Brown03] along the same lines of the original rejections. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 14-15).

21. Claims 14-17 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Pare98] (U.S. Patent 5,802,199).

22. *The following is in regard to Claims 14-17 and 26.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the

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statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Pare98] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Pare98] along the same lines of the original rejections. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 16-17 and 20-21).

In addition, claims 16 and 26 have been amended in accordance with claim 2 to denote that (a) a guide image is displayed "before obtaining the object image," and (b) the guide image is "layered ... over the object image after obtaining the object image," wherein (c) the guide image is "displayed at a fixed position on the display." The remarks above concerning the combination of [Flom87] and [Hong] are also applicable to claims 16 and 26

23. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Musgrave] (U.S. Patent 6,377,699).

24. *The following is in regard to Claim 19.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Musgrave] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Musgrave] along the same lines of the original

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rejection. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, page 21).

25. Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Oda03] (U.S. Patent 6,591,001).

26. *The following is in regard to Claim 20.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Oda03] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Oda03] along the same lines of the original rejection. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 21-22).

27. Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Cambier03] (U.S. Patent 6,532,298).

28. *The following is in regard to Claim 21.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Cambier03] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Cambier03] along the same lines of the original

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rejection. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 22-23).

29. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Hsu00] (U.S. Patent 6,100,811).

30. *The following is in regard to Claim 22.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Hsu00] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Hsu00] along the same lines of the original rejection. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, page 23).

31. Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Saito02] (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0034321).

32. *The following is in regard to Claim 23.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Saito02] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine.

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[Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Saito02] along the same lines of the original rejection. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, page 24).

33. Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Doster] (U.S. Patent 5,956,122).

34. *The following is in regard to Claim 24.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Doster] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong] was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Doster] along the same lines of the original rejection. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 24-25).

35. Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over [Flom87], in view of [Hong], in further view of [Pare03] (U.S. Patent 6,662,166).

36. *The following is in regard to Claim 25.* Note that the addition of the guide display means of [Hong] into the identification apparatus of [Flom87] does not detract from the statements given in the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 in support of the combination of [Pare03] with [Flom87]; nor does it diminish in any way the originally posed motivations to combine. [Hong]

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was shown above to remedy the deficiencies of [Flom87]. Therefore, a prima facie case of obviousness can be established in view of [Pare03] along the same lines of the original rejection. For the sake of brevity, the details will not be repeated here. The Applicant is referred to the previous Office Action dated 3/23/04 (see previous Office Action dated 3/23/04, pages 25-26).

Conclusion

37. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Colin M. LaRose whose telephone number is (571) 272-7423. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Amelia Au, can be reached on (571) 272-7414. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the TC 2600 Customer Service Office whose telephone number is (571) 272-2600.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

CML
Group Art Unit 2623
13 June 2005



VIKKRAM BALI
PRIMARY EXAMINER